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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the rationale for the development of several sports programs for Australia's children, their main features, and evidence of the extent to which they are achieving their goals. The programs include AUSSIE SPORT: Sport for Kids, a modified sports program for the senior grades of primary schools; Sportsfun, an after school program for primary school children conducted by secondary school students; and Sport It!, a 14-week skill development program for primary-age children conducted by their classroom teachers. Overall research into the efficacy of the sport programs indicates that they have been successful to a significant extent in achieving their goals. The evaluations have also indicated ways in which specific programs could be improved and have identified areas in which new programs or support for existing programs are desirable. (Contains 14 references.) (JDD)

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AUSSIE SPORT - A COMPREHENSIVE MODIFIED SPORT PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN - AN EVALUATION.

A PAPER DELIVERED TO THE AIESEP CONFERENCE

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SYNOPSIS

The AUSSIE SPORT program, developed jointly by the Australian Sports Commission, the national governing bodies of sport in Australia, and State and Territory Education, and Sport and Recreation Departments has been in operation since 1986. In that year AUSSIE SPORTS, the modified sports program for the senior grades of primary schools, (now called AUSSIE SPORT : Sport for Kids) was introduced. Since then a number of other programs including Sportsfun, an after school hours program for primary school children conducted by secondary school students, Sport It!, a fourteen week skill development program for primary age children conducted by their class teachers, and Ready, Set, Go, a development of the Sport for Kids program have also been introduced. The last two of these are receiving strong commercial sponsorship.

The authors, who have been researching these programs since 1986, and who are conducting several ongoing evaluations of them, will outline the rationale for the development of these programs, their main features, and report evidence relating to the extent to which they are achieving their goals.

Evaluating AUSSIE SPORT

When AUSSIE SPORTS was launched in 1986 it came with a commitment that the program would be evaluated on an on-going basis, a commitment which has continued to the present. However, this commitment was not put into effect prior to schools taking up the program, and thus well controlled 'before and after' studies were not possible.

The first evaluation (Russell and Traill, 1987) concentrated on measuring participation rates, the impact on school sporting programs, the suitability of the resources provided and the in-service support provided to teachers. The main strategies were an analysis of orders for AUSSIE SPORTS materials, a survey of a sample of participating schools, interviews with the principal of a sample of non-participating schools and case studies of some participating schools.

By August of 1986 449 of approximately 8000 primary schools had purchased the AUSSIE SPORTS kit, and this had increased to 919 by March 1987. The non-participating schools were generally aware of the program, although country schools were less aware than city schools, with 62 of 73 schools saying they were using the AUSSIE SPORTS principles in their sporting programs. Nearly half (43%) of the non-participating schools interviewed stated that they intended to introduce AUSSIE SPORTS in 1987, 40% did not intend to and 17% were undecided.

Teachers were generally enthusiastic about AUSSIE SPORTS, with the awards scheme being the least well accepted component. Specific comments concerning some aspects of the resources, including a desire for some additional resources, were reported by teachers and many of the suggestions were incorporated into later products.

They also strongly agreed with positive statements (or strongly disagreed with negative statements) concerning aspects of the program. For example, on a 5 point Likert type scale (highest score 5, lowest 1, midpoint 3) they agreed the program allowed skill development in a variety of areas (4.5), decreased 'win at all costs' attitudes(4.2), increased the quality of instruction (4.1), promoted good sporting behaviour (4.4), improved the quality of sporting activities (4.1) and that the program had overall made a positive impact (4.3).

Using a similar five point format the children also strongly supported AUSSIE SPORTS. They agreed that they usually liked AUSSIE SPORTS (4.5), they learned a lot at AUSSIE SPORTS (4.3), that they were proud of their AUSSIE SPORTS achievements (4.4), that they looked forward to AUSSIE SPORTS (4.5), that they could usually complete the AUSSIE SPORTS activities (4.4), that they did lots of different things in AUSSIE SPORTS (4.4) and that they liked sport more than this time last year (4.2).

A similar evaluation procedure was adopted in the 1988 study (Clough and Traill, 1989). The number of schools participating in AUSSIE SPORTS had risen to 2040 by October 1988, but teachers and children from 400 newly enrolled schools provided similarly high ratings for the program. Analysis of the children's data by gender showed that girls and boys rated the program equally highly.

There was an emerging recognition of the need for teachers to receive more training about the aims of AUSSIE SPORTS, about the ways in which these might be developed and in the rules and skills of many of the games.

The 1989 evaluation focussed on the impact of AUSSIE SPORTS on community sporting clubs. A total of 34 sports were surveyed at the national and state/territory level, with 300 separate associations involved. Of these 196 returned useable questionnaires. Thirty three of the 34 sports reported having one or more modified versions of their sport, but 29 state or territory associations co-ordinating these sports did not offer modified versions (Clough and Traill, 1989b).

Of the 156 associations reporting modifications, the most common modifications for the most highly modified version of the sport were; to equipment (128), scaled down area (119), shorter playing time (112), competition (100), rotation of players (99), fewer players (60) and team selection (48). Of these 156 associations 146 saw the modifications as enhancing the sport, one did not believe they did, four were undecided and five did not respond.

With respect to enhancing the skills of their coaches, 146 of 185 associations said they had a policy while 34 said they did not and four failed to respond. Ninety three of the 147 associations who responded said they required their coaches to take a coaching course, 46 said they did not while 10 recommended attendance (Clough and Traill, 1989b).

In 1990 the focus of the evaluation was the extent to which AUSSIE SPORTS schools were staying in the program, the extent to which new schools were entering the program, and what might be done to retain young people who had completed primary school in sport, particularly community sport.

All but seven of the fifty long term user schools studied considered that they were still AUSSIE SPORTS schools, were very satisfied with the program, but wanted more support for their programs. Overwhelmingly the seven schools who did not regard themselves as AUSSIE SPORTS schools did so because they had abandoned the Awards Scheme. They reported that they had integrated most of the AUSSIE SPORTS principles into their sports programs (Clough and Traill, 1990).

A stratified random sample of 500 primary schools were interview by telephone using a standardised interview schedule. Almost 90% of those sampled considered themselves to be AUSSIE SPORTS schools, with a majority of those not considering themselves as AUSSIE SPORTS schools still including many of the AUSSIE SPORTS principles in designing their sports curriculum. The most popular modified sports were the team games of Minkey, Kanga Cricket and Teeball. The survey also revealed how few teachers had specialised qualifications in sport or physical education, with 25.3% of males but only 10.0% of females reporting such qualifications.

A series of intensive case studies of communities revealed that many children introduced to modified sports through the AUSSIE SPORTS program in their schools were looking for similar sporting opportunities in community sport, and that these desires were being met to varying degrees. The young people also emphasised the importance of the coach in determining the quality of their community sporting experiences and of their enjoyment of sport. Many young people also expressed a desire to be trained as coaches or umpires (Clough and Traill, 1990).

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In 1991 Sportsfun was launched nationally and as a result there were two major evaluations in 1991, with the Sportsfun evaluation being additional to that of AUSSIE SPORTS. Also, as part of a review of the present status and future directions for AUSSIE SPORTS a survey of young people and their parents was conducted by Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia).

The AUSSIE SPORTS evaluation involved a series of case studies and a telephone survey.

Only 4.5% of the 5,745 teachers sampled in the telephone survey of 486 schools were trained physical education specialists. A further 12.8% had a level 0 or above coaching qualification in at least one sport. A total of 13.6% of the teachers had attended a sports education inservice education course in the previous twelve months. Of the 5,745 teachers, 4211 (73%) were female and 1534 male (Clough and Traill, 1992a).

Using the inclusion of four of seven characteristics in their program as the criterion, 96% of schools were rated as AUSSIE SPORTS schools. The characteristics were:

1. emphasis on encouraging increased participation in a wide variety of sports,
2. implementation of a sequential skill development program,
3. continued use of AUSSIE SPORT resources,
4. ongoing commitment to professional development of teachers in coach/sport education,
5. modifications having been made to the sports offered (team member rotation, rules/competitive structure, equipment, scaled down area, shorter playing time),
6. development of school/community links (use of sport specific coaches, participation in community sporting activities),
7. focus on developing positive attitudes (less emphasis on 'winning at all costs', equal opportunity for both sexes, positive healthy lifestyle).

However, on this occasion, only 56% of schools nominated themselves as AUSSIE SPORT schools (Clough and Traill, 1992a).

At least one modified sport was included in the sport programs of 86% of the schools. More than half (54%) of schools reported that at least one modified sport was offered in their community. The most frequently noted modified sports were Little Athletics (22%), Aussie Footy (20%), Netta Netball and Minkey (18%), Mod League (17%), Teeball and Mini Soccer (Roo ball) (16%) and Kanga Cricket (15%) (Clough and Traill, 1992a).

Personnel other than school staff were used in school time sports programs by 72% of schools. These were most frequently parents (50%), community coaches (43%) and high profile sporting personalities (38%). In out of school time sports programs 30% of such personnel were used, with parents (20%), community coaches (9%) and high school students (3%) being the most frequent categories (Clough and Traill, 1992a).

The national evaluation of Sportsfun revealed that there was almost unanimous support for the program from the seven categories of people with an interest in the program, the secondary coordinators, the primary coordinators, the leaders, the children, the parents of the leaders, the parents of the children and the State and Regional AUSSIE SPORT Unit officers. Criticisms were largely restricted to the inability of the particular program to achieve the Sportsfun aims, rather than of the aims *per se* (Clough and Traill 1992b).

Secondary school coordinators unanimously agreed Sportsfun was a worthwhile program for all who participated. They believed that both the primary school participants and the leaders enjoyed the program. Leaders developed skills relating to teaching and management, and primary school participants tried new sports and developed skills in a range of sports. There were also benefits for the primary and the secondary schools and for the coordinators. The personal benefits from the program were the satisfaction of seeing the leaders interact with the children, the coordinators' improved personal relationships with the leaders and the financial return (Clough and Traill 1992b).

Primary school coordinators also found many benefits and had few criticisms of Sportsfun. They saw the leaders as developing responsibility and leadership skills and acquiring other skills useful later in life. The primary school children were seen to increase in initiative and sporting skills, and in the case of shy children, confidence. Their personal satisfactions from participating were the enjoyment of the after school activities, an opportunity to establish good rapport with the children, and the financial return (Clough and Traill 1992b).

Leaders sought, and received from Sportsfun recognition and reinforcement of a positive self-image. They become more confident in both themselves and their role as leader, and enjoyed being in charge. The opportunity to meet and develop a relationship with the primary children was an enjoyable experience for the children. They also enjoyed the opportunity to try out teaching, to gain valuable experience for their resumé and the status provided by wearing the Sportsfun clothing. The major difficulty they experienced was controlling the children, especially initially (Clough and Traill 1992b).

Of the primary school participants interviewed 73% said they always enjoyed Sportsfun, 12% that they mostly enjoyed Sportsfun and 15% that they sometime enjoyed Sportsfun. None chose occasionally or never. The main benefits they perceived were the learning of new sports and enjoyment and fun. They saw the leaders as more like themselves, and enjoyed the social interaction with them and with both old and new friends from among their school mates. Few children found fault with the program, but where there were complaints they included other children playing up, and leaders who yelled, swore, were bossy or were not strict enough (Clough and Traill 1992b).

Restricted funding means only a limited number of schools may join the program each year, and by 1991 about 8% of schools nationally had done so. What evidence is available indicates that few schools withdraw from the program either before or after the program becomes self-funding.

The Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia) study revealed important information concerning the AUSSIE SPORTS program and attitudes to sport among Australians. Organised sport was involving about two thirds of 13 -18 year old Australians in any one year. About one-third would be relatively heavily involved, playing with both their school and a community club; about one-quarter would play only with school teams; and about one in ten will play only with community clubs (Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia) 1991).

Ninety-eight percent of parents of 13 - 18 year old children in the Sport for Young Australians Study thought that 'playing sport is a good thing for children'. When asked to establish a list of priorities for 'spare time' activities for their children, the parents put 'sport' second only to 'school homework', and ahead of activities like 'art and music' or 'housework' (Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia) 1991).

Level of satisfaction with sport (and hence, participation) was linked to the coaching experiences. About three-quarters of the 13 - 18 year olds were attracted by the idea of being taught to coach and to improve their own skills at the same time. Enthusiasm for the idea was strongest among those who were participating most in organised sport (Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia) 1991).

The name AUSSIE SPORTS was well known to 13 - 18 year olds. There was evidence that the name was currently associated with sport for young children, and/or with modified sport that was not 'real'. Awareness of the AUSSIE SPORTS program was highest among parents of younger children (about 60%) and lowest among parents of older children (about 30%) (Measurement and Consulting Services (Australia) 1991).

The Australian Sports Commission decided that in order to capitalise on the image of AUSSIE SPORTS without retaining its 'kids stuff' image the term AUSSIE SPORT should become a generic for all the Sport for All programs, thus AUSSIE SPORTS became AUSSIE SPORT: Sport for Kids.

One of the few researchers who was able to measure changes in children's sport between the pre- and post-AUSSIE SPORTS periods is Ian Robertson. He conducted two surveys of senior primary school children in South Australia in 1979/80 and 1990. The first involved a stratified random sample of 2,300 twelve year old Adelaide children and the second a sample of 1,121 (553 boys and 568 girls) from 28 randomly selected primary schools in the Adelaide metropolitan area. The children involved were in year 7, or composite year 6 and 7 classes. Their average age was 12.5 years and represented about 10% of the age group in Adelaide schools in each case. The second survey repeated a number of questions from the first survey (Robertson, 1992a).

Sport continues to be the most popular leisure activity of 11 to 12 year old boys and girls with 69% and 62% of them, respectively, rating it as their first choice. The 1990 survey revealed an 11% increase in the number of boys, and 15% in the number of girls, who listed sport in the first three preferences of things they would best like to do. This trend was also reflected in the 10% increase in the number of boys and girls who had played organised sport for a school or club (Robertson, 1992a).

The children in the later study reported that they started playing organised sport at an earlier age than did those in the earlier study. The later study showed 36% of boys and 16% of girls compared with 18% of boys and 11% of girls in 1979/80 (Robertson, 1992a).

A considerable increase in the children's self-esteem to play sport was reported for both boys and girls. Self-esteem was inferred from their judgement of their perceived ability to play sport. In 1990 49% of boys judged their ability to be very good and 27% above average (points 5 and 4 on a 5 point scale respectively) as compared to 25% and 29% in 1979/80. The equivalent figures for girls were 24% and 34% in 1990 and 14% and 26% in the earlier study. The participation rates of the children in organised school and club sport increased for boys from 74% to 85%, and girls from 68% to 77%. Furthermore, over 70% of children indicated that they would like to learn one or more new sports (Robertson, 1992a).

Reasons given by children for dropping out of sport, that were related to perceived negative aspects of the organisation of junior sport, decreased from 45% to 30% over the ten year period. However, negative evaluations related to the behaviours of adults and other children increased from 12% to 20% in this period. The impact of the equal opportunity program was reflected with a very positive shift in the attitudes of boys towards an increasing acceptance of the involvement of girls in sport (Robertson, 1992a).

The attitudes of the children in the 1990 study were consistent with the 1980 sample in that the intrinsic factors in sport 'getting better', 'doing the skills' and 'exciting games' were valued as more enjoyable than the extrinsic factors such as 'winning', 'receiving trophies' and 'pleasing others'. There was a very significant positive shift in the response of children in terms of their fair play values. Most obvious were the improvement in attitudes towards others who made mistakes or played poorly, the need for respect for referees and umpires and the belief that all should have an equal opportunity to play. However, there was still a considerable number of children who expressed undesirable attitudes in terms of rule adherence and aggression (Robertson, 1992a).

The majority of the children felt that while winning was important the effort in trying to win was even more important. In other words, they valued the process of competition as more important than the outcome. Their responses also indicated that competition with others had to involve fairness, not becoming emotionally upset and an adherence to the rules of sport (Robertson, 1992a).

The results of the most recent study suggested that children are now finding more opportunity to develop friendships and that organised sport is perceived as less stressful. However, other responses indicated that the social pressures in junior sport still affect some children. The children also reported an increased participation in sport related activities during Physical Education lessons as well as between classes and between schools. The reason for this change reflected the promotion of AUSSIE SPORT in the school systems and the resulting support of teachers (Robertson, 1992a).

A further study conducted in 1992, while not specifically focussed on AUSSIE SPORT provides some valuable information concerning the participation of young people in sport. In an Australian Capital Territory sample of 1048 students in the 5 to 18 age group, playing sport was the favourite leisure activity of 43% of the sample, with hobbies (18%), being with friends (12%), playing or listening to music (11%), watching television (10%), reading or writing (3%) and going to scouts, guides, a church or social club (3%) as the other six alternatives (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

Almost half (49%) of the sample had represented their school against another school in a sporting contest during the present or previous year, with boys (53%) being more likely to represent their school than girls (44%). Fewer students represented a community club against another such club (46%), with this being due to a lower percentage of girls participating (38%) and a marginally higher percentage (54%) for boys (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

The most popular sports for inter-school competitions during the present or previous year were; athletics, with a participation rate (for those involved in inter-school sport during that period only) of 31%, netball (25%), soccer (25%), swimming (15%), basketball (12%), cricket (11%) and softball (11%). For interclub competitions the most popular sports were soccer (23%), netball (17%), basketball (11%), swimming (10%), athletics (9%), rugby league (9%), cricket (9%) and tennis (9%) (Clough and Traill, 1992c)

When looking at their overall sporting experience the most frequently noted sports played in classtime at school were aerobics/gymnastics /gym fun (55%), cricket/kanga cricket (50%), volleyball and softball (both 46%) and soccer/roo ball (45%). Aerobics/gymnastics /gym fun (57%), soccer/roo ball (53%) and cricket/kanga cricket (52%) were the most popular sports played by males in classtime at school. Aerobics/gymnastics /gym fun, (53%) cricket/kanga cricket (48%) and volleyball (47%) were the most popular sports played by females in classtime at school (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

The most frequently cited sports when playing sport for their school were swimming (22%), netball/netta netball and soccer/roo ball (both 18%), athletics (17%), softball (14%) and cricket/kanga cricket (12%). Males cited soccer/roo ball (24%) and swimming (22%) as the sports most frequently played for their school. Females had most frequently represented their school in netball/netta netball (32%) and swimming (21%) (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

When playing with family or friends the most popular sports were bicycle riding (78%), swimming (70%), skating (60%), tennis/ace tennis (50%) and horse riding (39%). For males the most popular sports played with family or friends were bicycle riding (76%), swimming (64%) and tennis (54%). The most popular sports females played with their family or friends were bicycle riding (80%), swimming (77%) and skating (67%) (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

In playing sport for a sporting club the most frequently chosen sports were athletics/little athletics (20%), soccer/roo ball and swimming (both 19%), aerobics/gymnastics/gym fun (18%), tennis/ace tennis (15%), netball/netta netball (14%) and cricket/kanga cricket (13%). The popular winter codes of Australian football/Aussie footy (10%), rugby league/mod league (8%) and rugby union/walla rugby (6%) were not highly chosen as club sports, in part because of the low involvement of females in these codes and perhaps because participation by males was spread over these three codes. Soccer/roo ball and cricket/kanga cricket were the most popular competitive club sports for males, with aerobics/gymnastics/gym fun and netball/netta netball the most popular for females (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

When asked why they played their favourite sport, 98% of these young people indicated that it was because 'It's fun'. Other strongly chosen responses were 'It makes you feel good' (90%), 'Something to do' (81%), 'You make new friends that way' (80%) and 'I am really good at this sport' (75%).

When they were asked how they felt when they played sport in four different contexts students agreed that fun was the major characteristic in all four settings except playing sport for a sporting club, where excitement was rated first and fun second. Excitement was rated second in playing sport with family or friends and playing sport for their school, but third for playing sport in classtime at school. Developing skill was rated third for all contexts other than playing sport in classtime at school where it was rated second. Thus fun, excitement and developing skills were the perceived concomitants of sport in all four contexts with only the order changing. The least noted concomitant was boring (ranked 11th except in classtime in school where it was 8th), with the next lowest being 'dangerous' (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

When questioned concerning the perceived benefits of sport, males and females agreed that improving their sporting skills (90%), being physically active (85%) and making new friends (81%) were important. Males were more concerned with the competitive aspects of sport, with a higher proportion of boys than girls playing sport to compete against others (83% for males and 66% for females), or to beat them (61% for males and 36% for females). Being like their sporting heroes was more important to males (57%) than females (31%). Meeting members of the opposite sex was relatively unimportant as a reason for playing sport, although the percentage did tend to rise with age (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

Young people indicated that they would play more sport if there was a competition available in one of their favourite sports in which they could do well (75%). Freedom to play when they wanted to was a consideration for (63%) of the respondents, and particularly for the older ones, while cost was also a consideration (61%). Parental permission was a major consideration (59%), especially for the younger children. (Clough and Traill, 1992(c), p. 50)

Overwhelmingly, factors associated with the coach would most discourage young people from playing sport, with 'the coach only putting the good players into the game so that I miss out' (60%), 'the coaches not really being interested in the players, but just being interested in winning' (59%) and 'having a poor coach' (48%) being the most highly ranked choices. Costing too much money and poor umpiring (both 46%) and studies (45%) were the next most highly chosen (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

Almost three quarters of students had one or more sporting heroes or heroines, with over 700 heroes or heroines being named. Mal Meninga was most frequently chosen, followed by Laurie Daley, Michael Jordan, Hayley Lewis and Bradley Clyde. Three of the top ten were women, with two of the top ten being United States basketball players. Just failing to make the top twenty were mum and dad, equal at twenty first. Generally, students saw their sporting heroes and heroines as determined, committed leaders who exhibited desirable physical features such as speed and strength. Those students with sporting heroes or heroines were evenly divided between those who felt their sporting heroes or heroines had influenced their sporting choices and those who felt they had not. The fact that the questionnaire was completed in May and June, during the winter sporting season and during the lead up to the Barcelona Olympic Games, probably influenced the order of choice (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

About one quarter of the young people never attend a live sporting event; however, about one third attend once or twice a year, about one fifth attend once a month, and another one fifth attend once a week. Just over half of the young people would prefer to attend live sporting events than watch them on television, while another quarter would sometimes prefer to attend rather than watch sports events on television. The distribution was very similar for males and females, but older students were more likely to want to be there than younger students (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

Almost four fifths of those surveyed were satisfied with the sporting facilities that were available to them. Of the few students who felt sporting facilities were insufficient, most expressed their needs at a general level, for example, 'better grounds', 'better equipment', 'better grandstands', 'better changerooms' or 'bigger gyms'. Having courts close to home was important for some, while older students preferred larger regional facilities (Clough and Traill, 1992c).

The final program on which it is possible to report at this time is SPORT IT! a fifteen week program for students in years one through six of primary school sponsored by Pizza Hut. Pizza Hut provided teachers with a detailed manual and incentives, including a SPORT IT! pizza, a cap and badges, were available to children who complete various stages of the program. Each week teachers plan two skill development sessions of up to 30 minutes for young children and approximately 60 minutes for older grades. The class spends approximately five sessions on each of six skill units - locomotion, ball control, throwing, tracking and trapping, kicking and striking. Each unit contains sequentially arranged activities designed to be introduced to each student at his/her own level or stage of development.

The goals of the SPORT IT! program are to; develop the fundamental motor skills of children through a primary school based program, encourage the development of a broad range of basic skills which can assist with children's transition into modified sports, provide a motivation and external incentive for primary schools to develop and enhance their physical education program, and provide resources, strategies and student incentives to assist primary school teachers to implement the program.

An evaluation of the pilot SPORT IT! program involved a total of 208 teachers (82% female, 17% male) from 30 Sydney metropolitan primary schools and one hundred and sixty students (80 boys, 80 girls) in years 2 to 6. Teachers' main reasons for participating in SPORT IT! were program related, in particular, they expressed concern for the skill levels of their students. Over one third of the teachers mentioned skills when talking about why they participated in SPORT IT! (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993)

From the teachers' viewpoint SPORT IT! was achieving its aims of providing an enjoyable program for children, which caters for individual children's needs, provides activities at an appropriate level, teaches skills children can use in a variety of sports, caters equally well for boys and girls and consists of appropriately graded activities. An overwhelming majority of teachers (93%) felt the children's skill level in the activities undertaken in SPORT IT! had improved; none felt the children's skill level had fallen.

Scores for each statement about the aims of SPORT IT! were calculated on a scale of -2 (Strongly Disagree) to +2 (Strongly Agree). These scores show particularly strong support for the statements related to teachers implementing the program without further assistance (1.92), the program catering equally well for boys and girls (1.91) and teaching skills children could use in a variety of sports (1.88). The mean score for the statement about incentives strongly motivating students to participate in the program (1.23) was noticeably lower than other scores. A higher proportion of teachers responded with 'Don't Know' (15%) or 'Disagree' (14%) to this statement than was recorded in these response categories for the other statements. Though higher than the mean for the statement 'the incentives strongly motivated students to participate in this program' , the mean score for the statement ('SPORT IT! improved my physical education program because the children found it more enjoyable than previously') was also lower than other scores (1.44). Again the proportion of teachers who responded with 'Don't Know' (15%) or 'Disagree' (8%) was higher than for other statements, except for the incentives statement (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

Teachers agreed the sections of the manual relating to the program's aims (pp. 2-7), its organisation (pp. 8-10), its implementation (pp. 11-17) and the skills were useful. Scores for each statement about the skills section of the SPORT IT! manual were calculated on a scale of -2 (Strongly Disagree) to +2 (Strongly Agree). The high value teachers placed on the skills section of the manual is illustrated by the mean scores for each of the statements about this section. Only the statement 9H, 'the skills section of the manual was useful because it catered for children in the same class with different skill levels', received noticeably less support (1.69), with other scores ranging from 1.81 to 1.93. Teachers indicated the high value they placed on the SPORT IT! manual as a resource by most indicating they would be prepared to pay from $6 to $15 to purchase it. Only one teacher had not kept the manual for future reference (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

Most teachers did not feel any specific activities created difficulties. The few difficulties encountered related to lack of equipment for the activity rather than to the nature or skill level of the activity itself. Most teachers grouped children on the basis of ability for SPORT IT! sessions. A slightly higher proportion of teachers (58%) made adaptations to the program than the proportion who made no changes (42%). Most of the adaptations related to the unavailability of equipment (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

The clerical work associated with SPORT IT! was 'worth the effort' for the majority of the teachers (76%). Two thirds of teachers had received, or made comments on the incentives. Few teachers received any parent feedback. Children generally liked the incentives (particularly the cap, less often the pizzas), teachers and parents expressed some reservations. Nearly all teachers (95%) will do SPORT IT! next year. Teacher's requests for further assistance generally related to equipment needs or specific teacher needs such as teacher inservice programs(Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

In their reactions to questions about their SPORT IT! experience, both boys and girls expressed their general approval for SPORT IT!. Strongest agreement was given for the statement 'SPORT IT! is fun'; 64% strongly agreeing and 21% expressing agreement with this statement. Support was also recorded for the statements:

- SPORT IT! teaches me to be a good sport; 46% strongly agreed and 40% agreed with this statement.
- The sports skills I learn in SPORT IT! can be used out of school; 54% strongly agreed and 23% agreed.
- Doing SPORT IT! makes me feel healthy; 53% strongly agreed and 21% agreed.
- SPORT IT! encourages. me to continue playing sport; 58% strongly agreed and 19% agreed.

These children rejected claims against the values of SPORT IT! when they strongly disagreed with the statements:

- Children laugh at me when I cannot do things in SPORT IT! (54% strongly disagreed).
- I feel out of place in SPORT IT! classes (48% strongly disagreed).
- Many SPORT IT! activities make me feel clumsy (67% strongly disagreed).
- SPORT IT! is boring (61% strongly disagreed).

Children expressed most uncertainty about SPORT IT! outcomes in response to the statements 'I learn something new every time I have SPORT IT!' and 'SPORT IT! teaches me to get along with others better' (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

Overall the children did not strongly support the proposition that the best features of SPORT IT! were the incentives of a pizza and a cap. While a higher proportion of children expressed positive feelings for the statement 'the best thing about SPORT IT! was getting a pizza and a cap' than expressed negative feelings, the proportions were close (48% expressed some level of agreement, 31% expressed some level of disagreement). Also, just over one fifth of the children responded to this statement with 'Don't Know'. A higher proportion of boys (51%) than girls (28%) strongly agreed the best thing about SPORT IT! was the pizza and cap; a higher proportion of girls (28%) than boys (14%) did not know if this statement was true of false. The proportion of girls who disagreed with this statement (16%) was also higher than the proportion of boys disagreeing (8%).

Just over half the children either agreed (16%) or strongly agreed (43%) that they liked the pizza. Nearly one quarter did not know if they liked the pizza, while 19% expressed some level of disagreement with the statement 'I liked the SPORT IT! pizza'. Just over half the boys strongly agreed they liked the pizza (51%) while only one third of the girls (34%) expressed this feeling (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993)

While numbers at the individual year levels are often so small that any interpretation of this data must be made with caution, it does appear that the high approval rating for SPORT IT! tended to fall away by Year 6. In this instance, the small group of boys involved in this sample expressed general disagreement with many of the positive statements about SPORT IT!. For example, as a group they disagreed with such statements as 'SPORT IT! is fun', 'SPORT IT! helped me improve my sporting skills' and 'The best thing about SPORT IT! was the activities'. The Year 6 girls were a little more restrained but still registered overall disagreement with such statements as 'I learn something new every time I have SPORT IT!' and 'SPORT IT! encourages me to continue playing sport'. The reactions of Years 3, 4 and 5 children were generally very supportive of SPORT IT!. However, Year 2 children expressed some reservations. For example, several of the boys agreed with the statements 'I felt out of place in SPORT IT! Classes', 'SPORT IT! is boring' and 'SPORT IT! makes me feel angry with other kids'. However, further testing of these conclusions should be made with a larger sample of children before any firm decisions could be made about desired year placement levels for the SPORT IT! program (Clough, McCormack and Traill, 1993).

To date no formal evaluations have been conducted of the Sportstart booklet, the Challenges and Pathways in Sport (CAPS) scheme or the Sport Start initiative, while an evaluation of the Ready, Set, Go program sponsored by Kellogg is in process.

Overall research into the efficacy of AUSSIE SPORT programs has indicated that the programs have been successful to a significant extent in achieving their goals. These evaluations have also indicated ways in which specific programs could be improved and have contributed towards identifying areas in which new programs or support for existing programs are desirable. Unfortunately it has not been possible to use appropriate control procedures to accurately assess the impact of programs, but where this has been possible the results have been encouraging.

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